

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 14, 2004

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WASHINGTON - A delegation from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) will visit Egypt from July 16-23. During their visit, Commission members will meet with a broad range of individuals from Egyptian society, including government officials, religious leaders, human rights groups, scholars, educators, legal specialists, and others active in civil society in Cairo and Alexandria. The delegation will consult with these individuals on human rights issues, including freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, as protected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other instruments to which Egypt is a party. The standards set forth in these documents are also the underpinnings of the work of the Commission.

The USCIRF is an independent, bipartisan federal commission that advises the President, Secretary of State, and Congress on how to promote religious freedom and related human rights around the world. It was created by the U.S. Congress in 1998. It consists of nine appointed Commissioners. The purpose of the visit is to learn what the Egyptian government and its civil society is doing to promote freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief in accord with international standards embodied in the UN human rights instruments to which Egypt is a party. Commission members note Egypt's influence on trends in the Arab world and Middle East. This trip is aimed at strengthening efforts to protect human rights worldwide.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom was created by the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to monitor the status of freedom of thought, conscience, and religion or belief abroad, as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and related international instruments, and to give independent policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and the Congress.

- Preeta D. Bansal ,
- Felice D. Gaer ,